I CLAIM

1. In a method of compiling satellite imagery and generating a map therefrom, an improvement comprising:

watermarking image data acquired by a satellite;

storing the watermarked image data in a database;

generating a map from the database; and

watermarking the map.

2. In a method of generating a digital map from a database containing data from a plurality of aerial sources, an improvement comprising watermarking the map.

3. The method of claim 2 in which the watermarking encodes, or points, to information that is also conveyed with said map in the form of header data.

4. The method of claim 2 in which the watermark permits later identification of the data sources used in generating the map.

5. The method of claim 2 in which the watermark comprises, or serves as a link to, an image identifier.

6. The method of claim 2 in which the watermark comprises, or links to, data identifying at least one of the following: component maps used in forming said digital map, the date of digital map creation, an identifier corresponding to a person who created the digital map, an identifier corresponding to a person to whom the digital map was provided.

7. The method of claim 2 in which the watermark is designed to be lost, or degrade predictably, when the map is processed in a particular manner.

8. A database storing plural sets of component map data, from which a composite map formed using said component map data can be formed, characterized in that said plural sets of component map data each are encoded with a different watermark, said watermark encoding, or linking to, meta data associated with each said component map data.